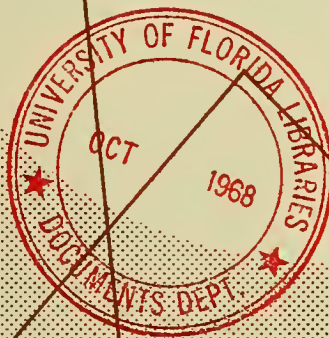


ES 14.102 : C43/2

HIGHLIGHTS of SYMPOSIUM on CHILD WELFARE



U. S. DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH,
EDUCATION,
and WELFARE

WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

• Children's Bureau

1964

This publication covers highlights of the Washington Symposium on Child Welfare which was co-sponsored by the Children's Bureau and the International Union for Child Welfare. The Bureau will continue to study child welfare practices and experiments -- not only in this country but in other countries as well.

One major problem confronting most of our metropolitan areas today is the influx of low-income, minority group families who come from rural and mountain areas. Among these families, there is a heavy marital breakdown. As a result, tremendous loads are being placed on welfare departments in caring for infants, preschool and school age children.

Several studies show that large numbers of well babies are still being kept in hospitals because of the lack of foster family homes or other foster care resources. The problem of the homeless infant and young child who require long time care needs current examination.

The Bureau and all organizations concerned with children need to further their thinking in order to develop a fully rounded complement of old and new services to meet these new challenges in providing sound child welfare.

Katherine B. Oettinger

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Chief, Children's Bureau
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HIGHLIGHTS OF SYMPOSIUM ON CHILD WELFARE

Sponsored by: The Children's Bureau, Welfare Administration,
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

and

The International Union for Child Welfare

Co-chairmen: Mrs. Katherine B. Oettinger, Chief, Children's Bureau
Mr. Leonard W. Mayo, President, International Union
for Child Welfare

Attending: Forty-three specialists in child development and welfare. Most of them were policy and program personnel from public and voluntary agencies and organizations.

Objectives

- To hear about some of the experimental programs in other countries -- particularly the group care programs for children introduced by the Youth Aliyah of Israel and the "Shkola Internat" of the Soviet Union.
- To identify the relationships of the Israel and the Russian programs to the rearing of children and the use of group care programs in the United States.
- To find out what, if anything, the United States, Israel, and Russia can learn from each other.
- To consider if ideas or activities in the Israeli and Russian experiments -- which put a great deal of emphasis on what happens to the child outside the home -- might be adapted or applied to child rearing in this country -- where most emphasis is put on what happens to the child inside his own home.

To see if any part of the two programs can be used to ease hardships existing in culturally and economically deprived families and communities in this country.

The Washington Symposium -- often referred to as a "clinic for ideas" -- along with a similar symposium held in New York City, are the first held in this country. Previously, similar symposiums were held in Europe and elsewhere.

In opening the symposium, Mrs. Oettinger said that one of the reasons for calling together the specialists was the expanding international activities of the International Union and the Children's Bureau.

"We cannot afford to be uninformed of the ways other nations are rearing their children," Mrs. Oettinger told the symposium.

"Unless we watch carefully, we may be denying our children certain stimulations -- intellectual and otherwise -- that are being experienced by boys and girls of other nations -- children our children must meet and deal with when they are adults.

"The depth of our understanding about the role today's children will play in shaping the future of man's destiny is in direct ratio to our knowledge of the ways those children live -- their ideology, goals, culture.

"Realizing that, we must ever be mindful of the experience of other countries with their children. We must constantly reexamine and weigh our methods of child care and compare them with those of other nations.

"In the United States, we believe that the home is the keystone of our society," Mrs. Oettinger said, first voicing an idea that was to be rephrased again and again during the day's symposium.

"But, for one reason or another," Mrs. Oettinger reminded, "far too many of our children in many sections of our country are being deprived of the wholesome and stimulating influences which good family life brings. So, I repeat and underscore 'let us never end our evaluation of the best methods for the care of our children away from their homes.'"

"With that in mind," Mrs. Oettinger ended, "all of us who work to better the welfare of children must inspect and judge carefully what

is going on elsewhere in the world. Only to the degree that we are flexible in our own approach to the tools of helping children grow up into useful, productive citizens, will we be fulfilling our obligations to assure each child a chance to develop to his and her fullest potential in our democratic society."

Mrs. Oettinger said that this symposium was only a beginning and that she would appoint a small committee from the Bureau staff to explore the ideas brought out during the day's sessions.

Symposium Co-chairman Mayo reviewed the objectives of the International Union for Child Welfare. Among them: to help and protect all children of any race, nationality, or creed; to distribute information and to carry out research in child welfare problems; to stimulate child welfare work through conferences, working groups, and publications; and to link member organizations with the United Nations and its specialized agencies which have granted the International Union for Child Welfare consultative status.

The Program for Youth Aliyah in Israel

Mr. Moseh Kol, for 10 years director of Youth Aliyah of Israel told the symposium participants about that program.

In brief Mr. Kol said:

The 30 year old Youth Aliyah movement began after the Nazi rise to power in Germany. It had two purposes: to rescue Jewish children from the Nazi tyranny and to absorb them into Israel's life.

To the present time, Youth Aliyah has absorbed 110,000 orphans and semi-orphans -- girls from 12 years of age, boys from 13 to 18. These children have come from over 80 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Most (95%) have remained in the country and hold important positions. They continue their contact -- especially in their spiritual attitudes -- with the settlements and educational centers where they receive their training.

Today Youth Aliyah is working to integrate the young generation (12,000 trainees) into its society where they can share in the cultural values, attitudes and behavior which two generations of the new Israel has developed.

Since Youth Aliyah started, new directives regarding absorption and education uphold the basic ideals of Youth Aliyah, the principles of

social education, the role of manual labor in education, the aspiration towards better human relationships, the edification of man who believes in a better and more beautiful world.

Youth Aliyah does not compete with government facilities, organizations, or institutions caring for children and youth. It provides for children for whom an ordinary solution cannot be found and who cannot be rehabilitated within the existing facilities. This includes gifted and intelligent youth as well as weak and retarded ones.

Some of the Youth Aliyah children are healthy mentally and physically, but retarded socially and culturally.

For youngsters who do not fit in a school framework, or if facilities do not fit their needs, youth day centers have been set up. In these centers, they study and work as well as promote social and cultural values. Many enter training facilities in youth groups at Kibbutz or cooperative settlements in children's villages and in educational centers with vocational trends. For the backward or mentally disturbed, special facilities adapted to their levels are being provided.

With the help of psychological clinics, and normal pupils who are tolerant and sympathetic to these children, many have been integrated into various classes according to their age and intelligence. Children so badly disturbed that they cannot be included in the normal framework even with special assistance, are placed in special educational units in the youth village and vocational apprentice homes.

For youngsters immigrating to Israel alone, everything possible is done to continue child-parents contact and to continue love and understanding between them. When the parents come to Israel, they are expected to show understanding of their children's new ways of life -- ways Israel feels is better for the future of both children and parents.

Upbringing in Collective Settings in the USSR

Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner, Professor, Psychology and Child Development and Family Relationships, Cornell University, reported his experiences during three visits to the Soviet Union in the past 3½ years, the last trip as an exchange scientist of the Institute of Psychology.

In brief, Dr. Bronfenbrenner said:

I would like to describe Soviet Russia's nationwide program of institutional upbringing introduced by Khrushchev in 1956, with the stated

aim of creating the new Soviet man. To accomplish this, major responsibility for child rearing in the Soviet society is being shifted from the family to the children's collective. Beginning at 2 months, the youngsters are being brought up first in nursery and kindergarten and then in special organized boarding schools, and so-called schools of the prolonged day, which are essentially boarding schools, the only difference being the children go home at night and sleep.

The new type of schools -- originally conceived as boarding schools -- would complement the usual academic subjects with training in two spheres held essential to the upbringing of a communist for productive work and collective living. Khrushchev said, "The plan will solve the problem of imparting communist upbringing to the rising generation. At the same time, millions of women will be released from household chores and child rearing and will find productive jobs in the construction of the communist society."

Such nurseries and kindergartens serve children from the age of 2 months to 6 years, both on a boarding and day care basis.

Soviet educators claim the following advantages for the institutional environment as a context for child rearing. First, not having received adequate communist upbringing, many parents lack the quality of character necessary for proper child rearing. Second, since families differ in cultural background, this factor gives unfair advantage to others. Third, and above all, it is essential that a child be given experience and training in collective living as early as possible, preferable in the first year of life. Thus the children learn early to identify themselves with the collective and to subordinate selfish desires to the welfare and productivity of the group.

At the present time, 7 million children, representing almost 10 percent of the Soviet population of preschool and school age are being raised in institutions of this kind. The program is expected to involve one-third of all Soviet children by 1970 and 100 percent by the 1980's.

Most parents are eager to have their children enroll. The fees are scaled to income, and it is quite low in most instances. The mother is free to work or study full time, thus increasing her immediate or subsequent earning power. There is more space in the apartment. Food costs are appreciably reduced.

At the present time the broken home gets priority.

Soviet parents see the new institutions as offering benefits to the child which cannot be provided by the family or the ordinary day school. These include enriched diet, special exercise, early training in

language, music, dance, and especially the development of skills, working attitudes, and habits which enhance the child's chance of acquiring further education and achieving success in Soviet society.

The boarding schools are always very near to a nursery kindergarten, in some instances in a single so-called "kombinat." In one particular school, 400 are in the boarding school and approximately 100 in the nursery.

The ratio of upbringer to youngsters is 4 to 16. The upbringers are on three 8-hour shifts, giving the youngsters multiple mothering.

There is a great deal of emphasis on self-care, self-sufficiency. By 18 months, the children are dressing themselves. I was told that by 18 months they are toilet trained and that no further concern need be given to that matter.

The emphasis is on group activity. The child is constantly re-enforced in the notion that it is more fun to be in a group.

In some of the nurseries, approximately a third of the children were under boarding care and the remaining under day care. In the first year, all children are taken home at night. By law, every Soviet mother gets a half hour off every 3 hours to breast feed her child.

The task of the upbringers is to forge a self-sufficient collective, so that the upbringer operates by remote control in order that the children themselves are maintaining their own collective. The collective continues all year round even though the school is closed.

The children can organize and maintain collective play longer than in the United States. Observers noticed two features of these children: their self-confidence and their camaraderie.

The younger children are responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of the entire school. How clean the school is each day goes down on their record. They plant the trees. They have to maintain them.

The Russian preschoolers show strikingly less aggression both towards each other and towards adults. They cry far less frequently, are more obedient and appear to be better able to take care of themselves. They impress one by their emotional blandness. One misses the smiles, the spontaneity, and the interest in the other person commonly expected in youngsters of this age. An analogous contrast appears in the behavior of the older children in the boarding school. In their external actions, they are well mannered, attentive, industrious. In informal conversation they reveal strong motivation to learn, a readiness

to serve their society, and perhaps what is best described as an idealistic and sentimental attitude toward life.

A growing body of research by American social scientists suggests that methods of pressure currently employed for the creation of the new Soviet man tend to enhance compliance, distortion and displacement of aggression. If so, we must consider the possibility that future generations of Russians will exhibit still wider prevalence of such reactions. At the same time, it is possible that the new institutions of collective upbringing carry within them the seeds of their own undoing in terms of these kinds of procedures, and that they entail side effects deleterious to society which will bring about modification of the system along more humanistic lines. But whatever direction the Soviet development takes, this is an experiment of unprecedented scope and significance.

Repugnant as the Soviet method of upbringing may seem to us, it speaks to problems which are not unique to the socialist camp. Throughout the Western world, increasing numbers of children are spending ever greater portions of their formative years in settings outside the family.

In the economically deprived segments of our nation, notably among Negroes, millions of innocent young children are being brought up in psychologically impoverished environments, devoid of personal attention, perceptual stimulation necessary for normal development and growth. By comparison, the children in Soviet state nurseries are probably being better served by their country and will be able to make a better contribution to the function of the government. I feel strongly about this matter, and I am sure those of you who have seen the conditions under which millions of American children grow up will agree.

The new phenomenon of middle class delinquency in American society may well represent an extreme expression of the changes in social morality, resulting from the substitution of the peer group for the family as a basis for inner conflicts that develop in children. In our society, as distinguished from the USSR, the peer group is an autonomous agent by and large free from adult control.

Another View of Group Care of Children

Another View of Group Care of Children, was presented by Dr. Martin Wolins, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of California, Berkeley, California.

In Brief, Dr. Wolins said:

There are many rights and many wrongs in relation to this whole matter of child rearing. No one clearly knows the answer.

Why compare Russia, Israel, and the United States? There are many reasons. First of all, the Israelis and the Russians have been quite creative. For whatever reasons, they have been creative. We may not like their creations. But that's another matter.

Because it has been in the American tradition to extol laissez-faire solutions in child rearing as well as in commercial and industrial activity, we find it surprising and even discomfoting to encounter formalized societal intervention in what may well be the most important societal function -- child rearing. And this, of course, is exactly the role of the Russian boarding school, the Shkola Internat, and the group care facilities that you have heard about from Mr. Kol, and also of course the group care facilities of the Kibbutz. They exist to enhance and promote socialization, the process of acquiring the socially necessary attitudes, values, and behaviors. Adding to our discomfort with these processes is their objective, and that is primary concern for the collectivity, for the social matrix and not just the individual alone.

High pressure for change has led the Russians to other than laissez-faire principles not only in industrial and commercial life but also in psychosocial enterprises, such as child rearing and education.

The aim of the boarding schools, according to the journal for that program, states: The task is . . . to develop minds in accordance with communist ideology and thus create great people . . . and every activity . . . consists of facilitating the development of ideological maturity to better form their communist convictions, sense of duty, and a feeling of responsibility of each individual with respect to the collective.

In Israel, the acculturative task has been to convert immigrants of the most desperate backgrounds to a national allegiance, enlightened innovation, and self-sacrifice and hard physical work.

The Israelis dealing with immigrant youth also ascribed a central position to the collective.

In Russia, there is great concern about the work with parents, the way the child relates to the parents, what the parents think of the Shkola Internat, and what will be the consequences of all this.

Three major reasons for the Soviet development are employment of women, scarce housing, and the cultural or ideological lag.

In the Soviet Union, foster family care does not exist. Russians hearing foster family care described shake their heads in disbelief and say: "Now, that just can't be. Such a thing just can't exist."

In Israel, foster family care is a minor program, of little importance and of little prospect of substantial growth.

We have in all some 150,000 foster homes, surely an inadequate number even for their present tasks. And even this small number of foster homes is laden with defects. The identity of a child in such a home is rarely clear; his stay is uncertain. Maas^{1/} has shown that in nearly half of the cases, the child finds himself a wanderer, packing up his affections if any, and his problems always, and transferring them to at least several foster homes before he matures and escapes this cruel rite.

The bad institutional program still suffers from monotony, restraint, lack of individualization, isolation. But it is improper, it seems to me, to continue treating these as unavoidable qualities of group care. In this possible revision of views lies the major contribution of the views of our two preceding speakers.

Whether Russian and Israeli group care programs are as good as seen by their supporters still needs much detailed follow-up and research investigations.

Is it true that individualization is impossible in group care? It is a myth that group care must result in isolation. Does a program oriented around the peer group always ignore the parents?

Group care needs not be possessed of the negative attitudes we assign to it, and which it may very well have, providing of course that we accept two rather crucial notions: first, that the individual's competitiveness is not necessarily the most ennobling of all states: that self in society may be a greater achievement than self and society, and certainly more acceptable than self against society. We have slowly begun heading in that direction for a good many years.

Accepting group care as an alternative worth investigating will open up some hitherto unexplored but most interesting paths. Youth Aliyah has pointed out at least two of these: the possible care and treatment of disturbed children in an institution for normal children, and the use of the institutional setup for children of high academic potential but low achievement. I am very impressed with what both the Russians and the Israelis do with the concept of "socially useful work."

^{1/} Maas, Henry and Engler, Richard: CHILDREN IN NEED OF PARENTS. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. 462 pp.

Questions and Answers

Question and answer periods followed each address, bringing out this information:

There are analogous periods in the development of our country and the development of Soviet Russia. Residential group care in the form of orphanages was used extensively in the period 1860-1910, not only as a way to free mothers for employment but also to train the children in the puritan culture. Regardless of those differences, the American way of life stresses the value of the individual; the Russians stress the group and the collective system.

The Soviet boarding school child and the Israeli Kibbutz child will have a strong "moral" commitment for the welfare of their society.

The Kibbutz children are much more guarded in their relationships with people than the other Israeli children.

The prestige of the educator is relatively high in the Russian boarding school system. They are dedicated to the concept that the State is the major authority for the cultural and ideological rearing of the child -- not the family or the community.

Hopefully as we Americans think of child rearing we can be socially inventive, not only about the things we can do in institutions, but also what we can do with parents to better enable children to function as human beings.

Both the Israeli Kibbutz and the Youth Aliyah programs as well as the Russian boarding school system emphasize the concept of "socially useful work." This is not the case in the educational curriculum of American public or private schools.

Residential group care in the United States has been improving a great deal during the last few decades, especially in the staffing and programs of treatment centers for moderately or more disturbed children. However, only a small segment of the public is aware of this uplift in the quality of care.

In Israel and the United States, the number of children in group care is very small compared to the number in Russia, which country plans to involve eventually all of its children in group living away from their own families.

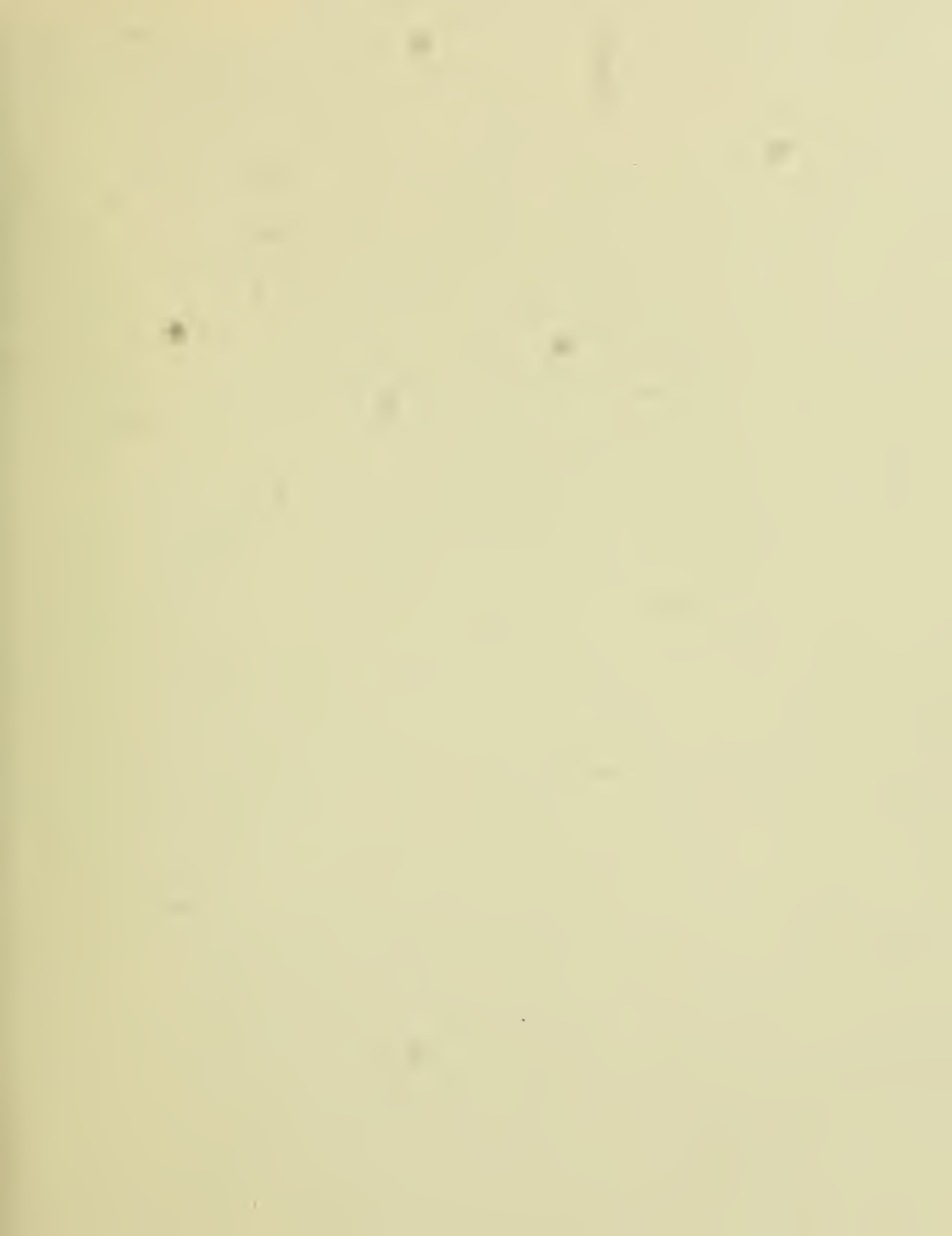
Some ideological aspects of rearing may be involved in reaching the culturally deprived youngster in the United States who needs an image other than that of the long term poverty of his parents.

American educators are experimenting with providing stimulating activities for parents and their kindergarten children in an effort to overcome some of their cultural disadvantages.

Russian ideology is moving more mothers into employment. Nine million mothers in the United States are now employed for reasons of economy and "self improvement."

Creative group centers may be encouraged to bring economically and culturally deprived groups back into the American life stream.

Imaginative programs will be needed, especially for parents and children on Indian reservations.



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